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BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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Mystery Shipwreck Identified

North Bend, OR – The wooden hulled ship buried in sand on the North Spit of Coos Bay has been identified by archeologists as the *George L. Olson*.

A Bureau of Land Management (BLM) archeologist, staff from the State of Oregon Oregon Parks and Recreation Department and the Coos County Historical Museum, and the Maritime Heritage Coordinator at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration have been conducting research over the past several weeks that included examining construction documents and historic photographs, as well as interviewing local community members.

This research suggests there is strong evidence that the mystery shipwreck is the bow-section of the steam schooner *George L. Olson*. Comparing historical photographs of the *George L. Olson* with current pictures of the shipwreck, both ships have three portholes with three chain plates aft of the portholes. The location of the Samson Post, Hawespipes, and the black vertical bumpers are identical. The pattern made by the through hull iron fasteners also appears identical.

The *George L. Olson* was originally named the *Ryder Hanify*. The steam schooner *Ryder Hanify* was built for J.R. Hanify and Company of San Francisco by the W.F. Stone shipyards of Oakland, California. The ship was launched on January 22, 1917. At 223 feet long and nearly 44 feet wide, the *Ryder Hanify* was one of the largest ships built to date at the Stone shipyard. The boat was powered by a 1,000 horse power steam engine and was designed to carry 1.4 million board feet of lumber at a time.

The *Ryder Hanify* was put into service in May 1917 hauling lumber. It completed several voyages during that year, including a shipment of lumber to South America in October, 1917.

In December 1944, the hulk of the *George L. Olson* was towed to sea and was cut adrift with the intention she beach on the North Spit. During the following years, build-up of the foredune in the area covered the wreck.

The BLM, along with Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, the Coos County Historical and Maritime Museum, and NOAA, continue to consult with the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office to review options and make plans for the ship's future. BLM and Museum staffs continue to document the ship with photographs.

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About BLM

The BLM manages more land – 258 million surface acres – than any other Federal agency. Most of this public land is located in 12 Western States, including Alaska. The BLM, with a budget of about \$1.8 billion, also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The BLM accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, and cultural resources on the public lands.

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